



Annual Report
of the
Independent Monitoring Board
at

HMP/YOI Isis

for reporting Year
January to December 2019

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Monitoring fairness and respect for people in custody

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1 STATUTORY ROLE

The Prison Act 1952 requires every prison to be monitored by an independent Board, appointed by the Secretary of State from members of the community in which the prison or centre is situated.

The Board is specifically charged to:

- (1) satisfy itself as to the humane and just treatment of those held in custody within its prison, and the range and adequacy of the programmes preparing them for release
- (2) inform promptly the Secretary of State, or any official to whom he has delegated authority as it judges appropriate, any concern it has
- (3) report annually to the Secretary of State on how well the prison has met the standards and requirements placed on it and what impact these have on those in its custody.

To enable the Board to carry out these duties effectively, its members have right of access to every prisoner and every part of the prison, and also to the prison's records.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite a good start to the reporting year, with staffing levels that allowed an improved regime for the first time in six years, so that prisoners were allowed significant time out of cell and improved opportunity to attend educational activities, by the end of the year available staffing had again dropped, this time by over 15%, resulting in yet another restricted regime. This regime has reduced to 50% the number of prisoners able to attend education, work and other activities at any one time, time spent in cell has increased and under 10% of key worker sessions are delivered per week, despite the Prison Service's own stated target of 100%.

We raised the serious negative outcomes for prisoners caused by this restricted regime with the Director General of the Prison Service in August 2019, but nothing has changed and, despite the best efforts of the Governor and her senior staff, the staffing situation has continued to deteriorate, with even further limitations placed on the regime. As outlined in the paragraphs that follow, these inadequacies beg the question as to whether the prisoners HMP/YOI Isis are always treated fairly and humanely (see section 7.1).

During the reporting year, there was a welcome reduction in levels of violence across the prison, with the implementation of additional security measures, funded by the 10 Prisons Project, and the prison's violence reduction strategy. Section 4.1 shows the downward trend in violence and use of force.

Isis remains a violent prison, despite the gradual decline in the number of incidents, with months such as January and October 2019 showing disturbing spikes. The violence is often unpredictable, with officer injuries often caused when they intervene to break up the violence (see section 4.1).

Recorded drug use (including finds, prisoners under the influence and MDTs) dropped during 2019, with 292 incidents of drug use during the year, down from 600 in 2018. Most of these uses related to cannabis, rather than, as in previous years, 'spice'. Much of this improvement can be attributed to the increased security measures, including a body scanner, funded by the 10 Prisons Project. The searching of prisoners arriving at Isis from other prisons is robust. However, it continues to be a concern to the Board that contraband items, such as mobile phones and SIM cards, drugs and tobacco, are routinely found every week on arriving

prisoners, who should have been searched and checked as they left their sending prison (see section 4.3).

2.1 Are prisoners treated fairly?

It is the Board's view that prisoners are unfairly affected by the changed regime which means that:

- at any one time, only 50% of prisoners can go to work, education or other activities, rather than the 75% at the beginning of the year, severely restricting training and rehabilitation activities
- the weekend regime has continued to be severely curtailed, resulting in some prisoners being locked in their cells for up to 26 hours on alternate weekends, which, we believe, breaches the UN Mandela Rules on solitary confinement
- the amount of time that prisoners spend out of their cells after their evening meal has been reduced
- important key worker activities have been severely limited, which means that small issues for prisoners become more significant when they are not resolved
- there is continuing stress on prisoners (and staff) because of the limited staffing (see section 7.1).

Despite the downward trend in the levels of violence and the use of force during 2019, the levels of violence are still high; the prison needs to continue its efforts to reduce these (see section 4.1).

A continuing concern for the Board, with respect to fair treatment, is that the property of many prisoners transferring to the establishment is lost and often never recovered because of the inefficiencies highlighted in previous reports about the Prison Service's approach to handling property. Despite annual assurances, there is no evidence that this is being addressed (see sections 4.6, 7.5 and B).

2.2 Are prisoners treated humanely?

Although, in general terms, prisoners at the establishment are treated humanely, there has been an increase in the number of applications to the Board relating to the treatment of prisoners by prison officers. This may, in part, be attributed to the large number of staff who are relatively inexperienced, but also to the time that staff have available to interact with prisoners (see section B).

The prison does not consistently enforce some food hygiene standards, including the wearing of 'whites', the checking and recording of food temperatures, and ensuring that soap and towels are available in the serveries. The cleanliness of serveries varies from week to week and spur to spur. Supervision by staff at mealtimes is inconsistent. Concerns have been raised by the Board that prisoners who are more vulnerable are not getting the right amount of food, or the food that they ordered (see section 7.3).

As also noted in its 2017 and 2018 annual reports, the Board has concerns about the continued detention of prisoners with enduring or chronic mental health problems and those with personality disorders. Although this involves a small number of prisoners, they can cause injuries to themselves and are often unable to function within the prison or cope with the day-to-day activities. Towards the end of the reporting year, the prison introduced challenge, support, intervention and planning (CSIP), a multi-agency approach to assess prisoners with complex needs and to develop individual action plans. The segregation unit is often the only

safe option for these prisoners, and, despite the caring support given, the Board remains concerned as to whether prison is the most appropriate setting to manage such individuals (see sections 8.4 and B).

2.3 Are prisoners prepared well for their release?

Isis is a training prison and is well equipped with both workshops and classroom facilities to assist in the education and retraining of prisoners before they are released and look for employment.

While considerable effort is made each day to ensure that all prisoners are undertaking purposeful activity, the Board remains concerned that the prison's 'training' mandate is not being fulfilled, for the following reasons:

- only 50% of prisoners are allowed to go to education at any one time because of the reduced regime
- there is often low attendance in education classes, caused by prisoners refusing to attend
- tutor absences are not always covered by the education provider, resulting in the cancellation of classes
- in some level 1 and 2 English and mathematics classes, there is poor engagement from the prisoners, who clearly do not want to be there but have been required to attend (see sections 7.1 and 9.2).

Release planning activities are restricted because, although the offender management in custody (OMiC) scheme has been introduced, only a small proportion of the key worker sessions that would have given support to low-risk prisoners can be delivered. Community rehabilitation company (CRC) staff meet all prisoners in their last 12 weeks before release, to assist in financial, accommodation and employment issues (see section 11.1).

Main areas for development

TO THE MINISTER

In our annual report for 2018, we made two representations to the Minister, concerning:

- the plight of prisoners with chronic mental health problems
- the longstanding problem of lost property when prisoners move between prisons.

No action has been taken regarding either point. The 'prisoners' property policy framework', referred to by the then minister in his reply, has not been published and neither, in relation to mental health services, is there any evidence of the local Place of Safety policy having been "looked at" or the pan-London protocol having been reviewed. There has certainly been no change to prisoners' experiences in these two areas. We urge the Minister to require Her Majesty's Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS), working with NHS England in respect of mental health issues, to develop concrete action plans to address these points (see sections 4.6, 7.5 and 8.4).

TO THE PRISON SERVICE

We ask the Prison Service urgently to review its human resource policies and procedures relating to workforce planning, recruitment, retention, compensation and motivation, to ensure that there are sufficient officers to operate a normal regime in the prison. We also ask

the Prison Service to describe/quantify the 'normal' regime that the prison would be expected to provide if full staffing was available (see section 7.1).

We ask that the Prison Service acts on inter-prison property transfers and the appalling ongoing situation of items being lost and never returned to the prisoner. We ask that any prison receiving a formal prison 'Comp 1' complaint about lost property on transfer be *required* to answer (see sections 4.6 and 7.5).

In the section to the Minister, above, we reiterate our concern about prisoners with serious mental health conditions and/or personality disorders being held in a training prison. We would ask that the Prison Service reviews its processes, including liaison with NHS England, for the allocation and transfer of such prisoners to more suitable accommodation, with appropriate facilities and residential therapeutic services (see section 8.4).

As Isis now has improved equipment to check prisoners being transferred to the prison, large amounts of illicit items – mobile phones, SIM cards and drugs – are being found on prisoners transferring from other prisons. The Prison Service is asked to review its procedures for searching prisoners who are being transferred (see section 4.6).

We ask the Prison Service to review its policies and processes for transferring prisoners. For those who are higher risk and have been moved to category B, we request that they automatically be transferred within a limited time to a category B prison, rather than there being protracted 'negotiations' in each case. For prisoners obtaining category D status, we urge the Prison Service to have a more transparent process than "waiting for the next bus" (see section 11.1).

Isis only receives prisoners from other prisons, and all prisoners should therefore arrive with an offender assessment system (OASys) report. We ask the Prison Service, as we have in previous years, to ensure that this happens (see section 11.1).

The food budget of £2.02 per day per prisoner, has remained unchanged for a number of years, but this is becoming more difficult to maintain as food prices continue to rise, and should be reviewed (see section 7.2).

TO THE GOVERNOR

We ask that the Governor:

- works with the Prison Group Director for London to develop a detailed plan and timeline to return the prison to a normal regime which addresses the Board's concerns about the negative outcomes for prisoners caused by the current restricted regime. This should lead to 100% of key worker sessions being delivered (see sections 7.1 and 11.1)
- On the subject of property being lost when prisoners transfer from other prisons, introduces a single system and point of contact for following up and resolving individual issues, rather than having different systems in reception and the business hub (see sections 4.6 and 7.5)
- continues to strengthen the violence reduction strategy and works with the Prison Service better to equip officers to handle violence when it occurs. This will increase in importance as the prison implements its young adult strategy, with all prisoners being aged between 18 and 25 years, and the corresponding potential for increased violence (see section 4.1)
- ensures that steps are taken to reduce the levels of self-harm (see section 4.5)

- implements the recommendations of the procedural justice review of the use of force (see section 4.2)
- ensures that kitchen orderlies can achieve the level 2 food hygiene certificate, and that there is an improvement in food hygiene practices and the supervision of meal service on the spurs (see sections 7.2 and 7.3)
- continues to work with Novus to drive up levels of attendance with a focus on tackling the issue of those prisoners who refuse to engage with education and training, either through their non-attendance or poor participation in sessions (see section 9.2)
- asks Novus to explore alternative approaches to the teaching of functional English and mathematics that increase the likelihood of learner engagement and achievement (see section 9.3)
- provides information and reading materials in the holding rooms, for prisoners arriving at the establishment and waiting to be transferred to G spur (see section 4.6).

Improvements

During 2019, the Board has observed the following improvements across the prison:

- reduced levels of violence, although these remain disturbingly high
- a substantial reduction in drug-related incidents
- reduced levels of force used
- improved facilities for families in visits
- the installation of in-cell telephones
- improved equality work across the prison
- a focus on the more challenging prisoners, through multi-agency initiatives such as CSIP.

The 10 Prisons Project provided additional funding for airport-style entry security, body scanners, drug detection equipment and the photocopying of all incoming post, metal detectors and additional dogs for detecting illicit items.

Despite these improvements and the hard work of the Governor and her staff, Isis has been subjected to staffing measures, mainly outside the prison's control, that compromise the purpose of the prison as a modern training prison for sentenced young men. It is a tragedy that so many of the excellent facilities in the prison have been underused, and that prisoners are having their rehabilitation opportunities limited because of external factors.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT

HMP/YOI Isis – named after the River Thames – opened in July 2010. It is a public sector training prison for convicted men, with a mix of young prisoners between the ages of 18 and 21, and category C adults. In 2017, the age cap was lifted, and the prison currently accepts prisoners of any age, but it is planned that in 2020 the prison will again be a prison for young adults between 18 and 21, and category C adults up to 25. In 2019, the proportion of prisoners between 18 and 25 gradually increased, so that by December 2019 60% fell into that category.

The prison is situated in Thamesmead, in south-east London. The certified normal accommodation is 478, and the operational capacity – that is, the maximum population that it can safely and decently hold – is 628. Although sited within the original perimeter wall of HMP Belmarsh, Isis is a completely separate prison.

The following provide services within the prison:

- Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust provides healthcare and Oxleas Interventions provides support to those with substance misuse issues
- Novus is the education provider
- MTCnovo is the community resettlement company, with Catch 22 working within the prison
- Mitie provides comprehensive facilities management, including catering
- Voluntary organisations working within the prison include the Shannon Trust, Switchback, Belong and the Samaritans.

Prisoners are accommodated in two houseblocks, Thames and Meridian, each comprising a central hub and four spurs. Each spur can accommodate over 70 prisoners, on three levels. Each spur has a servery, and outside each is an exercise yard with fitness equipment. Each houseblock has a laundry, operated by laundry orderlies.

In a block opposite the houseblocks is the ‘academy’, with 19 classrooms and a capacity in excess of 200; the ‘skill zone’, with six workshops; the library; the healthcare unit and the multi-faith suite. Separately, there is a well-equipped gym, able to accommodate 40 prisoners; a cardiovascular studio; an indoor sports hall and two outdoor Astroturf pitches. The kitchen, which prepares meals for over 600 prisoners each day, is managed by Mitie, with a workforce that includes 20+ prisoners.

B Evidence sections 4 – 11

4 SAFETY

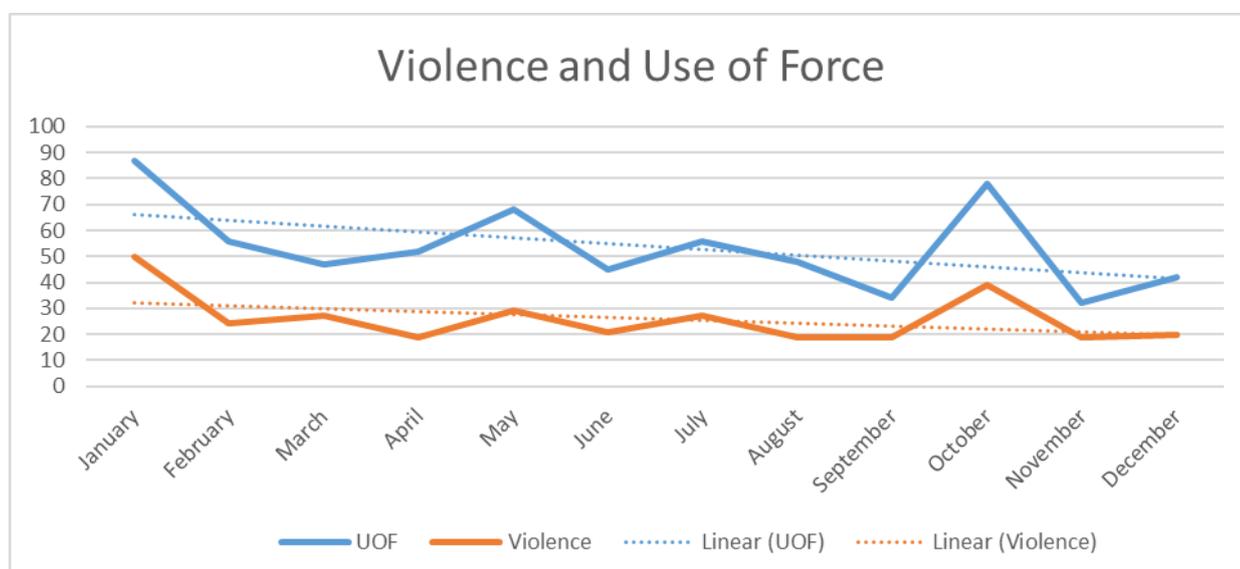
4.1 Assaults and violence

During the reporting year, there was a welcome reduction in levels of violence across the prison, with the implementation of additional security measures, funded by the 10 Prisons Project, and the prison's violence reduction strategy. The following 2019 figures were provided in safer custody reports, with the 2018 figures in parentheses:

- 104 assaults on prisoners (160)
- 119 fights among prisoners (161)
- 90 assaults on staff (106).

HMP/YOI Isis remains a violent prison, despite the gradual decline in levels of violence, with months such as January and October 2019 showing disturbing spikes. The violence is often unpredictable, with officer injuries often caused when they intervene to break up the violence. The number of assaults on staff remains disturbingly high, with a small but significant number of officers requiring hospital treatment and time off work. The new personal protection techniques (SPEAR close quarter personal protection, PAVA spray and rigid handcuffs) developed by HMPPS for officers remain unavailable until the OMiC scheme has been substantively introduced.

The following graph shows the monthly data in 2019 for violence and use of force, together with a trend line for the year.



Young men of 25 or under perpetrate most of the violence. Even though only around 60% of the Isis population is 25 years of age or less, over 85% of the violence is initiated by these young men. Much of this relates to gang, debt or drug issues, and petty disputes related to cell sharing, pushing in at queues and long-term grudges, although there are several instances of violence occurring when instructions from staff are not followed. The staff assaults often occur when staff are attempting to intervene to stop a fight or to protect a prisoner.

The 10 Prisons Project provided additional funding for airport-style entry security, body scanners, drug detection equipment and the photocopying of all incoming post, metal

detectors and additional dogs for detecting illicit items. In October 2019, the prison became a pathfinder site for the Mayor's Office for Policy and Crime. Over a two-year period, Isis will receive £400,000 to support the delivery of initiatives aimed at reducing the level of violence both in the prison and when prisoners are released.

4.2 Use of force

As can be seen in the graph above, over the course of the reporting year levels of use of force decreased by nearly 37%, and of assaults and fights by a similar amount (37.7%). This followed the introduction of a new violence reduction policy in May 2018, revisions to movement sequencing (for example when groups of prisoners move from their cells to education or training), and substantial changes to security infrastructure funded by the 10 Prisons Project. The establishment started this project with the highest rate of violence of the 10 prisons, with a three-monthly average number of assaults per 1,000 prisoners of 66.7, but showed the largest decrease of the 10 prisons over the period of the project, decreasing by 46.03%, to 36.

Routine use of body-worn video cameras (BWVs) increased slightly over the course of the year, averaging just over 70%. Some footage was available for about 63% of incidents, but only 35.3% included footage from before the start of the incident. Footage is reviewed at a weekly management meeting. The backlog of use of force paperwork decreased over the course of the year, from 882 at the end of 2018 to about 400.

Towards the end of the reporting year, the prison held a procedural justice review of the use of force. This concluded that prisoners do not feel that the four principles of procedural justice (voice, neutrality, trustworthy motives, respect) are met. Actions have been put in place to rectify this, including training officers and prisoners in a communications technique called RECODE, and reinforcing with officers the need to use BWVs.

4.3 Drugs and illicit items

The 'timeline' data referenced above shows 292 recorded incidents of drug use in 2019 (down from over 600 in 2018). Most of these relate to the use of cannabis, which has become the drug of choice, rather than the unpredictable 'spice'. During the reporting year, 398 drug tests (both random and suspicion) were undertaken, of which 67 were positive, 49 of which involved cannabis.

Intelligence with respect to drugs and other illicit items has been used with very positive results. During the reporting year, 348 items of contraband and 123 weapons were identified and seized, and a support worker was arrested under suspicion of bringing banned items into the prison.

4.4 Listeners

The Listener scheme was relaunched in 2018, and there were several problems in relation to this during the first seven months of 2019 which led to a low usage rate, including security clearance, mistrust by some prisoners and staff, and the transfer or release of experienced Listeners. However, the situation improved in the final five months of the year, with 11 qualified and security-cleared Listeners available across both houseblocks at year-end, with between 30 and 40 callouts each month.

4.5 Self-harm and suicide prevention

The number of assessment, care in custody and teamwork (ACCT) documents opened during 2019 slightly decreased to an average of 17 per month (or a total of 209 for the year – down from 214 in 2018). The management of the ACCT process was robust, with regular checks made by the duty governor and the safer custody team. Suicide and self-harm training has been rolled out across the prison, to all prison and non-directly employed staff.

There was a disturbing trend in self-harm over the reporting year, although the total number of incidents remained slightly lower than in 2018. Some of the 2019 increase was related to a small number of prisoners with mental health conditions or personality disorders, who self-harmed 10 or more times a month.

There was one death in custody during 2019, which is currently being investigated by the coroner and the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman.

4.6 Reception and induction

Prisoners arrive at reception from other prisons, and not directly from the courts. From checks carried out by Board members, the prison escort vans are reasonably clean and the prisoners are well treated by escort staff.

On arrival at reception, the formal processes are dealt with efficiently in some areas, and these are well decorated and clean. However, the holding suites continue to have no information noticeboards or reading materials for the new arrivals, and this matter should be addressed. The initial healthcare assessment and safer custody issues are carried out effectively, and peer mentor and Listener support are available. There has been an improvement in the speed with which prisoners are transferred from Reception to the Induction spur.

All prisoners should arrive with their property. However, in a small but significant number of cases this is not happening. This is an ongoing problem, and better measures need to be put in place in order that prisoners receive their property without delay or loss. During the reporting year, there were 82 applications to the Board about property, and at the end of the year there were 53 outstanding external complaints to the sending prison dating back six months, none of which had been answered.

During 2019, there were also delays in the distribution of handed-in or posted property and purchased items, resulting in 49 applications to the Board. This was caused mainly by a lack of available staff in reception to check items and distribute them to the houseblocks. During the year, approximately £6,000 was paid out by the Prison Service for property lost by Isis prisoners.

The searching of prisoners arriving at the establishment from other prisons is robust, with a body scanner, funded by the 10 Prisons Project and installed in 2019. However, it continues to be a concern to the Board that contraband items, such as mobile phones and SIM cards, drugs and tobacco, are routinely found every week when prisoners should have been searched and checked as they left their sending prison.

5 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS

5.1 Religious provision

The population of HMP/YOI Isis includes 215 prisoners who are Muslim, 103 Roman Catholic and 190 who are Church of England or of other Christian faiths.

Chaplains work with prisoners with complex needs. They have also worked with probation staff, community chaplains and outside agencies linked to resettlement. They give pastoral care to prisoners who have experienced bereavements of relatives or friends. New prisoners have a one-to-one meeting with a member of the chaplaincy at their induction. Sycamore Tree courses (victim awareness), Tarbiyyah (Islam) and STARI (anger management) courses are provided by the chaplaincy and are well attended.

The regime restrictions have resulted in a reduction in the number of prisoners attending religious services on Sundays. The average attendance numbers are 16 for Roman Catholic, and 21 for Church of England/Free Church services. Each Friday, Jum'uah is held in the visits hall and is well attended, with an average of 105 prisoners. 150 Muslim prisoners fasted during Ramadan and celebrated the festival of Eid.

5.2 Equalities

The ethnic breakdown of prisoners at the establishment is 68% black and minority ethnic, and 32% white. The age breakdown shows a small (4%) increase in the percentage of prisoners who are less than 26 years of age, to 59%. In December 2019, there were 38 foreign nationals at the establishment. A total of 100 prisoners have a disability, including reduced mobility, learning disabilities and difficulties, and mental illness (in the latter category there are 27, including 13 with a diagnosis of severe and enduring illness).

Equality representatives have been appointed in each houseblock. Six care and support orderlies have been recruited and trained, and a group for Travellers has been set up.

There are indications that the application of the incentives and earned privileges (IEP) scheme has an adverse impact on prisoners who are Muslim and Roman Catholic. Of prisoners on the basic regime, 39% are Muslim and 20% Roman Catholic; 35% of the prison population are Muslim and 17% are Roman Catholic. However, the proportion of enhanced prisoners by religion is comparable with the proportion within the prison population. In regard to access to orderly, mentor or red band posts, the proportion of black and minority ethnic prisoners in posts is comparable to that in the prison population, and the same is true for the proportions of Muslim and Christian prisoners. Fifty-one per cent of prisoners aged 18 to 25 years have posts, compared with 59% in the prison population.

An equalities meeting, chaired by the Governor or her deputy and attended by key staff, is held each month. This meeting reviews relevant data relating to areas such as adjudications, segregation, use of force and allocation of jobs, to determine if there are any issues requiring review. Although discrimination incident report forms (DIRFs) are routinely available on all spurs, the number of completed DIRFs remains low, at a total of 19 for the reporting year.

5.3 Complaints

During the reporting year, the prison received an average of 200 complaints per month, although the number of complaints received in the last quarter reduced to an average of 186 per month. The largest number of complaints concerned staff and property, as was the largest number of applications received by the Board.

5.4 IEP scheme

The IEP scheme has three levels. In 2019, an average of 10% of prisoners were on the basic level, with 43% on standard and 47% enhanced. Although intended to recognise good behaviour, as well as responding to poor behaviour, prisoners, understandably, focus on the

impact of warnings. The concerns raised with the Board included failure to explain the reasons for the warning, or to issue a warning slip. Towards the end of the reporting year, the prison renamed the local IEP policy as the 'incentives policy,' focusing on incentivising good behaviour. The impact of changes to the policy will become clear during 2020.

5.5 Visits and family engagement

Visits are held in a well-equipped and spacious visits hall on five days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday). Prisoners book visits using the biometric terminals in the spur. Enhanced prisoners have access to extended visits. Light refreshments are available in the visits hall and there is a children's play area,

The prison holds a family day each month. Designed to enhance family ties, each family day has a different theme. PACT plays a big part in these days, from working with prisoners on the houseblocks to the organisation of the day. In 2020, the prison aimed to increase the involvement of prisoners in the planning and organisation of these days.

6 SEGREGATION/CARE AND SEPARATION UNIT

6.1 The segregation unit

The segregation unit has 16 cells, plus two for special accommodation. An average of 38 prisoners were segregated each month in 2019 (the monthly average was 44 in 2018). This reflects the decrease in the number of violent incidents. In total, 451 prisoners were segregated during 2019, of whom 163 were young adults (compared with 525 in 2018, of whom 165 were young adults). The increase in the proportion of prisoners held in segregation who were young adults mirrored the increase in the proportion of young adults in the total prison population.

In 2019, four prisoners were held on the segregation unit for longer than 42 days, and one of those was authorised for 84 days. One prisoner held on the unit from mid-October 2019 to mid-January 2020 was only 19 years old. In each instance, due process was followed, with the Prison Group Director authorising the continued detention. These prisoners were eventually transferred but the Board remains concerned at the length of time it takes to secure a transfer, despite best efforts of the officers caring for prisoners.

6.2 Prisoners on ACCTs in segregation

There has been an improvement in the number of prisoners on an ACCT held on the unit, with the monthly average down to three, from four in the previous year. However, as in 2018, in some months up to six prisoners on ACCTs have been on the unit. The decision to hold such prisoners on the unit is always made by a governor and is subject to review.

6.3 Good order or discipline (GOOD)

A total of 107 prisoners were held in segregation over the reporting year under GOOD rules, and 49 of these were young adults. Staff are alert and responsive to the needs of the prisoners they are caring for on the unit, and GOOD reviews focus on the actions required to return them to the houseblocks. This can be particularly challenging at times, given the high level of non-associates that many prisoners have, restricting where they can be safely housed.

Attention is paid to ensuring consistency in GOOD reviews across all duty governors, and healthcare staff are always in attendance. Prisoners are given real opportunities to input to the discussion, consistent with the fairness and decency that we witnessed across interactions within the segregation regime. Unfortunately, changes to the time and day of the GOOD

reviews, introduced in November 2019, have resulted in it not always being possible for a Board member to be present at the reviews

6.4 Concerns

The Board has concerns:

- about the impact of segregation on rehabilitative efforts. Education outreach to the segregation unit is limited mostly to in-cell packs, and there have been times when even activities such as jigsaw puzzles have been in short supply because of budget constraints
- that the segregation unit is sometimes the only safe option for prisoners with serious mental health issues
- that delays in transferring a prisoner who has been recategorised to B have meant that he has stayed on the unit for an extended period.

7 ACCOMMODATION (including communication)

7.1 Staffing levels on the houseblocks

In our last annual report, we welcomed the improvement in the regime that had resulted from the improved staffing levels, but 2019 has evidenced how fragile such changes can be. By the end of 2018, the prison had more staff than its agreed number, and the regime had improved, so that prisoners from six of the eight spurs were able to attend education, work or other activities on Monday to Thursday. By the end of 2019, there were 112 officers in post but the number available to work on the spurs each day was 100 or lower. This turnaround in the number of staff available to work on the spurs was caused by a number of predictable issues, largely outside the control of the Governor.

These included:

- high levels of attrition, which were to be expected because of the large number of new recruits and the competition for staff from other prisons and higher paying agencies, such as the police and Border Force.
- the number of staff who were unable to work on the spurs, including those who were pregnant and those who, because of injury or illness, were on restricted duties. The position was exacerbated because funding was not available to cover the duties of these staff
- the inefficient central recruitment processes, which compared poorly to the results obtained when the prison controlled, for a temporary period, its own recruitment.

The prison has introduced new staffing profiles, which are regarded as permanent unless there is an addition to the number of funded staff. The impact on prisoners is as follows:

- Prisoners from only four of eight spurs are able to attend, at any one time, education, work or other activities on Monday to Thursday.
- The OMiC programme has stalled, such that at the end of 2019 only 3% of the weekly key worker sessions were taking place.
- Each weekend, 50% of prisoners are locked in their cells from lunchtime on Saturday until Sunday lunchtime.
- The amount of time that officers have to perform all but the essential tasks is much reduced, making it more difficult for prisoners to receive support in resolving issues and problems.

- Cross-deployment from other departments reduces the ability of those departments to fulfil their tasks – for example, checking and distributing property.

7.2 Kitchen, food and catering

A well-qualified team runs the kitchen. The prisoners are encouraged to work independently, and the atmosphere is calm and pleasant. Prisoners are expected to hold or achieve level 1 food hygiene certificate. However, the Ministry of Justice food safety management assessment noted that kitchen workers were not given the opportunity to achieve level 2 in this certificate. The prison should ensure this is addressed by the education contractor, Novus.

The food prepared is varied and nutritionally balanced. A system of pre-select menus of hot and cold food, repeated every four weeks, operates, and the menu provides for religious, cultural and medical needs. This is all provided within the budget of £2.02 per day per prisoner, but this is becoming more difficult to maintain as food prices continue to rise, and should be reviewed.

At the end of August 2019, the kitchen manager, who had been at the establishment for seven years, left. This position was filled at the beginning of November. In the second half of the year, prisoners raised concerns at the community council, and verbally to Board members, about the quality of the food provided, the size of portions and the completeness of dishes. The manager is working to address the issues raised and it is anticipated that they will be resolved in 2020.

The maintenance and repair of equipment have improved since 2018, including the long-awaited repair of damaged tiles and the Hobart mixer, used in the preparation of cakes and puddings.

7.3 Serveries

There has been no discernible improvement in the food hygiene practices and standards in the serveries since the 2018 annual report. Some spur serveries and food trolleys are not always clean, and leftover food is often left in trays in the serveries overnight. Some serveries and trolleys are cleaned to a high standard but there is no consistency and no systematic approach to ensure that all spurs meet basic food safety standards all of the time. Servery workers are either not provided with or do not routinely wear protective clothing, soap and towels are not generally available, and the temperature of food is not checked and recorded. Board members have raised these issues in numerous rota reports during the year, and in previous years.

Officers need to take a more proactive approach to managing the serving of meals, not only to ensure that standards of hygiene in these areas are upheld, but also to ensure that prisoners receive the food that they have ordered, that there is proper portion control and that more vulnerable prisoners do not find themselves without food, or without the food that they ordered.

7.4 Prison cells

During this reporting year, the prison was able to fit toilet lids to toilets in all cells. There are 150 double cells in the prison. In these cells, although the addition of toilet lids is an improvement, it is still the position that only a flimsy curtain separates the lavatory from the rest of the cell. This does not provide sufficient privacy for either the user or the other occupant, who might be trying to eat his meal, wash or clean his teeth at the time. The prison has worked to resolve the problem of badly stained toilet pans, but this requires continuous

additional effort because the source of the problem is the material used to manufacture the pans.

In September 2019, the installation of in-cell phones was completed. It is the Board's view that this will have major benefits for prisoners, including reducing levels of violence, bullying and self-harm, and supporting family engagement.

7.5 Property

In the 2018 annual report, the issue of property not transferring with the prisoner was identified as a significant problem. The prison has introduced a range of procedures for recording property receipt, chasing missing property and responding to prisoner complaints. However, prisoners arriving without their property continues to be a significant problem, particularly if the prisoner is transferred under restraint. In 2019, the Board received 82 applications relating to transfer of property from other prisons, compared with 89 in 2018. In response to the 2018 annual report, the minister stated that HMPPS planned to publish a 'prisoners' property policy framework'; this has not happened.

Additionally, there have been backlogs in distributing property purchased by, or sent or handed in for, prisoners, mainly caused by a lack of staff to check and distribute items. The number of applications to the Board relating to property within the prison was 49, compared with 40 in 2018.

8 HEALTHCARE (including mental health and social care)

8.1 Healthcare provision

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust is the provider of healthcare services at the establishment. Oxleas Interventions provides a clinically led substance misuse service that helps prisoners with drug and addiction problems.

8.2 Staffing and clinics

The healthcare service is led by the operational manager. The primary healthcare team provides a 24-hour service and has 19.8 full-time-equivalent (FTE) staff, of whom 14.3 FTE are qualified healthcare professionals. There are 3.1 FTE primary mental health staff; the team consists of a clinical psychologist (three sessions per week), senior therapist (six sessions per week), a therapist (two sessions per week) and two full-time assistant psychologists, one of whom has a focus on complex cases. This provision is supplemented by four sessions of counselling per week. For secondary mental health provision, there are four FTE staff, including three qualified nurses. There are five psychiatry sessions and a full-time assistant practitioner for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Twenty-two specialist clinics are held each week, including with the general practitioner (four sessions per week), dentist (four sessions per week) and psychiatrist (five sessions per week), and three clinics are held monthly – ultrasound, podiatry (two session per month) and optician (four to five sessions per month).

8.3 Complaints

Healthcare has a separate system of handling complaints from prisoners. In 2019, an average of 10 complaints per month was made through this system. Medication and staff were the two categories that attracted the largest number of complaints

8.4 Mental health services

The healthcare provider is able to transfer prisoners with an acute need to a prison with the necessary inpatient facilities reasonably quickly. However, the Board continues to be concerned that there are prisoners at the establishment, although small in number, with enduring and chronic mental health issues or personality disorders. These prisoners can cause injuries to themselves and others, and are often unable to function within the prison or cope with the prison's day-to-day activities. This leads to a disproportionate demand on the prison's resources, in terms of cost and staff time. Towards the end of the reporting year, the prison introduced CSIP, a multi-agency approach to assess many of these prisoners and to develop individual action plans.

8.5 Drug strategy

Oxleas Interventions (psychosocial substance misuse services) has 17 FTE posts which include two support workers and 12 therapy posts. Clinical substance misuse services have 2.6 FTE - 1.6 qualified and 1 unqualified.

The new security measures, introduced using funds from the 10 Prisons Project, have dramatically reduced the usage of drugs, especially 'spice', among the prison population. The results of both random and suspicion testing for drugs have shown a decline since the summer, with 11 positive results in the fourth quarter, compared with 20 in the previous quarter.

9 EDUCATION AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

9.1 Education provision

HMP/YOI Isis is a designated training prison, charged with preparing prisoners for their release by providing meaningful education and vocational training opportunities. Although sentence lengths vary, most prisoners have enough time to have their needs assessed and complete an accredited course.

The prison contracts Novus to deliver its education and training programmes. These are developed in response to the requirements of the Ministry of Justice and the Governor. The programmes are aimed at providing prisoners with skills and qualifications that enhance their prospects of employment on release.

Novus provides a range of classroom-based programmes, including English and mathematics, business management and broadcasting. The December 2018 HMIP inspection report judged the quality of teaching, learning and assessment as requiring improvement. Since that inspection, Novus has introduced a more robust system of quality assurance through regular learning walks, formal lesson observations and the scrutiny of prisoners' progress. Novus now judges the majority of the teaching to be good, and managers are actively supporting staff with areas of practice that are deemed to still require improvement.

9.2 Attendance at education

In the HMIP report (see above), low attendance at some sessions was raised as an issue. During weekly rota visits, Board members have expressed concerns about the number of prisoners who refuse to attend the sessions held in the 'academy'. Refusal to attend classes continues to have a significant impact on the prison's attendance figures, which are currently at 84% of places listed. Although the figures contained in Board rota reports are not comprehensive, daily attendance figures are often lower than 84%. They also strongly suggest

that refusal to attend sessions is higher in English and mathematics than in vocational training workshops such as barbering, and painting and decorating.

Board members have also observed low levels of engagement from some prisoners in English and mathematics lessons. Prisoners avoid sanctions through the IEP system by attending, but clearly this is no guarantee of meaningful participation.

Both the academy and the 'skill zone' are well-equipped, modern facilities, but Board members have observed that these resources appear underused, with rooms often empty. Class cancellations occur with worrying regularity. These are often associated with tutor absences but sometimes changes to the prison regime are responsible. The split regime, introduced in November 2019, has also had a negative impact on attendance at educational provision.

The Board feels that the prison should continue to work with Novus to drive up levels of attendance, with a focus on tackling the issue of prisoners refusing to engage with education and training, either through their non-attendance or poor participation in sessions.

9.3 Allocation to courses and activities

Novus is responsible for the delivery of English and mathematics. Whether prisoners need to start at entry level or are capable of working on the City and Guilds functional skills qualifications is determined through the induction process. In some cases, qualifications gained by prisoners at school are picked up via their unique pupil number. The prison also endeavours to confirm any accreditations secured at other prisons, to avoid prisoners repeating learning that they have already mastered. There are systems in place to monitor the progress of learners with special educational needs, as well as to monitor the access to courses by prisoners from ethnic minorities.

There is a focus on prisoners reaching level 2 in functional English and mathematics, as this is widely regarded as an industry-level requirement. Approximately 83% of the prisoners who enrol on English and mathematics courses gain some form of accredited qualification. However, the December 2018 HMIP inspection report was critical of the low levels of students achieving level 2 in functional English. The prison's post-inspection action plan acknowledges the need to address this matter, and this is ongoing.

Prisoners are expected to achieve at least level 1 in functional English and mathematics before they are allowed to access the vocational training opportunities or take a prison job. Although fully supporting the aim of improving the basic literacy and numeracy skills of prisoners, the Board is concerned that this approach may prevent some prisoners from gaining important practical skills that would improve their prospects of employment on release.

Prisoners who have level 2 in English or higher have been able to study with Goldsmiths University for the 'extended project qualification'. In 2019, four prisoners joined a Goldsmiths programme on release.

9.4 Library

The library, which is run by Greenwich Leisure Ltd (Better Leisure) on behalf of the Royal Borough of Greenwich, has a welcoming environment but is still underused by prisoners, with between 670 and 1,000 attending each month. In addition, the resignation of the deputy librarian resulted in a restricted number of prisoners allowed in the library at any one time during the period 22 August to 16 December 2019. A new deputy was then appointed, and this should resolve the situation for 2020.

Prisoners on courses in the academy and skills zone attend the library weekly as part of their course, but those attending directly from the spurs still remain a concern, with attendees varying considerably; between 86 and 250 a month. A small outreach service operates on a monthly basis. Prisoners are also able to receive books by request.

10 WORK, VOCATIONAL TRAINING and EMPLOYMENT

10.1 Prisoner involvement

The number of activities, including education, vocational training, work and personal development activities for which prisoners are listed, during a sample of days in the last three months of the reporting year, ranged from 500 to 550. These activities are split between mornings and afternoons, so that an average of 270 prisoners will be listed to attend an activity each morning or afternoon. The average attendance at activities is 75% of those listed. The main reason for non-attendance, accounting for 20% of cases, is prisoner refusal.

In the skills zone, Novus runs training courses in barbering, painting and decorating, industrial cleaning, aerial window cleaning, upcycling, waste management and horticulture. All courses offer City and Guilds or WAMITAB (Waste Management Industry Training and Advisory Board) qualifications, with a consistently high pass rate for prisoners. During the reporting year, there have been a number of positive developments in the training offered and its impact on the wider community. The investment in the recycling workshop has benefited the prison through providing a wide range of reusable clothing and bedding for the stores. The upcycling department has raised over £7,000 for a local hospice through the sale of items made by the prisoners.

10.2 Work opportunities

A range of work opportunities is available to prisoners, including houseblock orderlies; orderlies for visits, induction and reception, the serveries, the library, the chapel and the gym; and a range of representative and mentor roles. There are 120 work or mentor roles each day, although these are not all full time. Kitchen workers are needed every day of the week, including weekends. The number of prisoners at work on Friday afternoons falls sharply because work, education and other activities are not run, and prisoners spend their time on the spurs, with visits to the gym and inductions for new prisoners. There is an almost 100% attendance rate for work roles.

During the reporting year, the prison reviewed the prisoner pay policy, creating improved parity for roles and with other prisons. This review has reduced the number of complaints by prisoners regarding this issue.

11 RESETTLEMENT PREPARATION

11.1 Resettlement planning

During 2019, the offender management unit (OMU) has operated with a number of vacancies. As well as administrative vacancies, there were vacant probation posts, including the senior probation officer post. The position improved in the latter part of the year, when vacant probation staff posts were filled, but the turnover of administrative posts has continued.

As in 2018, there continues to be a backlog of OASys reports, which underpin sentence planning and a reduction in the number of outstanding reports has been hampered by the continued high level of new prisoners arriving without a completed OASys. All new prisoners should arrive with an OASys report. This unacceptable situation has continued for several years. Low- and medium-risk prisoners raise concerns that high-risk prisoners are given

priority for completing OASys reports, but a report is needed for categorisation reviews, and it is low- and medium-risk prisoners who are likely to be recategorised to category D.

There has been an increasing number (30 at year-end) of prisoners who, having been recategorised to category D, have not been able to move to a suitable prison. There have also been long delays in moving prisoners who have been recategorised to category B. In two cases such prisoners were held on the segregation unit for more than 42 days until a transfer was arranged. The system appears to rely on negotiation rather than an objective methodology for planning transfer.

At the end of 2018, most prisoners had a dedicated key worker as part of the OMiC scheme. However, the staffing difficulties (see section 7.1) have meant that only 3% of the key worker sessions were being delivered at the end of 2019. The new staffing profile, introduced in November 2019, should mean that OMiC can be introduced effectively.

11.2 Release support

The CRC subcontracts to Catch 22 for the delivery of resettlement services in the prison. Resettlement workers saw an average of 46 prisoners each month. Prisoners are offered help to open bank accounts, settle court fees and resolve problems with outstanding debts. Not all prisoners need or accept this help, and, on average, 12 prisoners each month are helped to open a bank account and 13 are helped with resolving issues with fines.

An average of 18 prisoners per month leave the prison with employment or a place on an education course. The prison has several initiatives to increase the prospect of prisoners having employment on release. These include:

- Prisoners working in The Quays (the staff restaurant) are linked into the Right Choice programme, which prepares prisoners for employment in the catering and hospitality sector.
- From Switchback, 80 young adults received weekly one-to-one pre-release support to help them to prepare, practically and emotionally, for release. Eighteen young men became Switchback trainees, receiving one-to-one support through the gate, alongside real work training after release. Nine young men have moved into permanent employment.
- The prison was awarded the Proactive Prison award by the Employers' Forum for Reducing Reoffending, for its work in preparing prisoners for the world of work through its partnerships with a range of employers, through the charity Bounce Back.

Catch 22 provides a resettlement programme, Getting It Right. Although the number of prisoners eligible to join the programme will typically be in the late teens or twenties, only six to eight prisoners participate each month. In 2019, 81 prisoners participated in the programme, with only four failing to complete it.

Section C – The work of the IMB

The Board has a dedicated team of members, and each week one member conducts a rota visit and one member takes applications from prisoners. Each member also has an area of special interest, which involves attending prison meetings of interest to their area. In addition to national training courses, each monthly Board meeting is preceded by a training session, where a member of the prison staff will speak about a specific area or initiative in the prison. The Governor or her deputy attends each Board meeting.

During the year, the annual team performance review was undertaken, where members contributed to a review of the Board's performance, and areas for action were identified.

Three new members joined the Board in early 2019 and a further recruitment campaign was held in November, with two candidates recommended for appointment.

BOARD STATISTICS	
Recommended complement of Board members	16
Number of Board members at the start of the reporting period	11
Number of Board members at the end of the reporting period	13
Total number of visits to the establishment	399
Total number of segregation reviews attended	41

Section D – Applications to the IMB

Code	Subject	Current reporting year	Previous reporting year
A	Accommodation, including laundry, clothing, ablutions	28	45
B	Discipline, including adjudications, IEP, sanctions	37	43
C	Equality	3	8
D	Purposeful activity, including education, work, training, library, regime, time out of cell	24	11
E 1	Letters, visits, telephones, public protection restrictions	19	30
E 2	Finance, including pay, private monies, spends	24	14
F	Food and kitchens	1	4
G	Health, including physical, mental, social care	37	41
H 1	Property within this establishment	49	40
H 2	Property during transfer or in another establishment or location	82	89
H 3	Canteen, facility list, catalogue(s)	7	15
I	Sentence management including home detention curfew, release on temporary licence, parole, release dates, recategorisation	82	71
J	Staff/prisoner concerns, including bullying	66	71
K	Transfers	17	16
	Other	12	1
	Total number of IMB applications	488	499

While applications to the Board are similar over the entire year to the numbers for 2018, the numbers for 2018 were somewhat skewed by two long-term segregation unit prisoners, who submitted a total of 80 applications to the Board between them. Taking this into account, there has been an increase in applications to the Board of around 15%.

One major area of concern from the above numbers is the continuing, appalling situation relating to the transfer of prisoners' property from the sending prison when they are transferred to HMP/YOI Isis. Frequently, items of personal value are lost, as well as clothing, and requests made by the complaints clerk at HMP/YOI Isis often fall on deaf ears at the sending prison. The response to this situation in previous reports has been poor and no changes appear imminent. The prison has paid out approximately £6,000 in compensation to prisoners for lost property.

Sentence management has also attracted a large number of applications to the Board, caused, in part, by staffing constraints in OMU and the failure of the key worker scheme to take off. Many of these relate to transfer to category D (open) prisons, which often takes place many months after the prisoner has been given category D status. It is unfair that, after several months of hard work on the part of the prisoner to gain his open conditions status, he continues to be detained in closed conditions.